



# The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

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## Board of Directors Reports Dramatic Progress toward Implementing Goals

At last year's annual meeting, Thoreau Society members responded enthusiastically to Joel Myerson's presidential address, "The State of the Thoreau Society, 1994 and Beyond" (see *TSB* 208, pp. 1-3, for the complete text of the speech). The accolades indicated that a large majority of the Society members who attended the business meeting supported the newly elected Board of Directors' decision to move forward with the ambitious goals outlined in Myerson's speech.

Board members responded throughout the remainder of last year and the first half of this year by exchanging many hundreds of electronic-mail messages, speaking on several dozen telephone calls, corresponding by mail, sending facsimile transmissions, conducting telephonic conference calls, and meeting in Concord and Lincoln, Massachusetts, on four occasions: 10 July 1994, 10-11 December 1994, 22-23 January 1995, and 14 April 1995. These unprecedented activities of the Board have proven extraordinarily productive, as the results reported below indicate.

### **The Thoreau Institute, A Project of The Thoreau Society and The Isis Fund**

The Thoreau Institute is a collaborative project of the Thoreau Society and the Isis Fund. Under Don Henley's and Kathi Anderson's leadership, the Isis Fund's most popular activity, the Walden Woods Project (WWP), has raised more than \$12 million to purchase and preserve endangered land around Walden Pond. In addition to saving land, WWP and the Isis Fund are committed to an educational mission which will help assure that the public understands the critical importance of historically, culturally, and environmentally significant sites in Concord and elsewhere around the country.

Education, of course, is also a major component of the Thoreau Society's mission, which, as stated in its by-laws, is "to honor Henry David Thoreau; to foster education about and stimulate interest in his life, works, and philosophy; to coordinate research in his life and writings; and to act as a repository for Thoreauviana and articles of memorabilia relevant to Henry David Thoreau and his times." Plans for the Thoreau Institute combine the strengths of both organizations, provide a vehicle for the Thoreau Society to carry out its mission more effectively than

in the past, and fulfill the Isis Fund's ambition of assisting in the development of an educational program promoting Thoreau's humanistic vision of nature and humankind.

As a physical entity, the Thoreau Institute will consist of the Adams House in the historic Walden Woods and, adjacent to the Adams House, a new building designed to house, preserve, and make widely accessible materials relating to Thoreau. Both organizations have worked closely with the project architects, Gantaume and McMullen of Boston, to design an edifice conducive to research and teaching, and complementary to the existing Adams structure and the beautiful surroundings. The new 5,500 square-foot building will feature a secure, climate-controlled archives; an attractive, commodious reading room; and a state-of-the-art media center. Groundbreaking for this building will take place sometime during the fall of 1995, likely in late September. The new building at the Thoreau Institute is projected to cost \$1.8 million and is scheduled for completion in the late spring of 1996.

### **Acquisition of the Harding, Adams, and Robbins Collections**

In addition to advancing their missions, the Isis Fund and the Thoreau Society had another compelling reason for establishing the Thoreau Institute: the prospect of acquiring private collections of Thoreauviana. The principal reason the Society's Board of Directors decided to sell the Thoreau Lyceum on Belknap Street in Concord was that the property did not provide a secure environment for valuable collections—nor could the

### **Special Announcements!**

Look for a special issue of the bulletin between the Autumn 1995 issue (to be mailed in early October) and the Winter 1996 issue (to be mailed in early February).

A portion of each bulletin, beginning with the Autumn 1995 issue, will be dedicated to responding to inquiries from the membership. Please send your questions to the Thoreau Society, Inc., 44 Baker Farm, Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773.

We recently converted our membership records to a new system and ask that you take a moment to examine your address label and let us know if we need to alter your address.



Belknap Street property be remodeled to accommodate such collections. Once plans for the Thoreau Institute were placed on a viable footing, the owners of the three largest Thoreau collections in private hands decided to donate their collections to the Society. Those donors are our Founding Secretary and past president **Walter Harding**, his wife Marjorie, and their four children; the family of our past president **Roland Robbins**, which includes his wife Geraldine and their three children; and the wife (Charlotte) and niece (Shirley Van Clay) of our Founding President, **Raymond Adams**. These three large and extremely valuable collections, in addition to the Society's current archives, will make the collection to be housed at the Thoreau Institute by far the largest and most impressive collection of Thoreauviana in the world.

A special issue of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, to be published between the Autumn 1995 and Winter 1996 issues, will provide members with details of both the Thoreau Institute and the three new collections that will be housed at the Institute.

#### **Transition Period**

Although the Thoreau Lyceum on Belknap Street in Concord was sold on 19 December 1994, the Society's educational programming continued without interruption. Mail-order gift and book sales were suspended temporarily, but those sales are expected to resume later this fall. The Society's education program, as well as Thoreau's Walden house replica, which had been located behind the Belknap Street property, found a new home at the Concord Museum, where Anne McGrath continues to delight students and visitors of all ages with her popular presentations about Thoreau. In the spring of 1995, the Society carefully dismantled the cabin replica (one of three designed by Roland Robbins, the archeologist who discovered the site of Thoreau's house on the shore of Walden Pond) and donated it to the Concord Museum, which will reconstruct the replica and use it for educational purposes.

#### **Opening of The Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond**

The Society's Board members joined the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, the Walden Conservancy, and the Walden Woods Project in a collaborative effort to set up a visitor's center and shop across the street from Walden Pond at 915 Walden Street in Concord. The Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond is owned and managed by the Society and serves as a model for groups working together with a common mission.

Merchandise at the Shop includes a large selection of Thoreau-related gifts and clothing, children's toys, and a growing inventory of books. Later this year the Society plans to begin offering members selected merchandise, including new and used books, through mail order. In addition to merchandise, the Shop at Walden Pond will soon feature multimedia touch-screen presentations, with emphasis on Thoreau and Walden. These

presentations help orient visitors to the area and enhance the Society's educational mission. Society members who visit the Shop at Walden Pond receive a 10% discount on their purchases.

#### **Expanded Staff and Programming**

With plans to build and manage a new 5,500 square-foot facility, care for the world's most comprehensive collection of Thoreau-related materials, increase educational programming, and maintain a visitor's center and book and gift shop in Concord, the Society's Board encountered new personnel needs and employed additional staff.

**Ellen Kraft Spear**, the Society's new Acting Executive Director, joins the Thoreau Society after many years of experience in the not-for-profit world. Spear started her nonprofit career in broadcast media and was a founding staff member at Connecticut Public Radio, where she served as the station's first Program Director. While employed as Assistant Manager of WGBH Radio, she won the George Foster Peabody Award for Radio Station Excellence. Spear went on to offer her programming, development, and management skills to another not-for-profit arena—the arts. During the two years she spent as Cultural Centers Coordinator for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Spear created and managed a \$40 million statewide grant-making program for cultural organizations' facilities improvements. Most recently, the USS Constitution Museum benefited from Spear's expertise. During her four years as the Museum's Executive Director, Spear orchestrated a successful application for accreditation by the American Association of Museums, and developed and secured funding for a dynamic long-range plan that included a \$6 million facilities upgrade.

**Deb Caton**, the Society's new Assistant Executive Director, launched her not-for-profit career when she began working for the Society in March of this year. Caton's varied background encompasses planning and promotions for programs and events in the corporate sector, the community, and higher education. Caton started her career in programming while she studied English and Journalism at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, where she worked as the Undergraduate Assistant to the Director of Greek Affairs. After a brief period as a radio announcer and copywriter for a broadcast company, Caton was employed by Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts. Caton coordinated the school's internship and student-employment program, and catalogued and maintained the Career Library. While working as a Program Development Specialist in the Division of Continuing and Community Education for the Dallas County Community College District, Caton was responsible for a weekend-long Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program offered to K-12 students from local school districts, developed and managed a Kids' Art and Theater Series (KATS), and wrote copy for and helped with the design of the department's many publications. Caton managed a market



research and focus group facility where she built and maintained a growing client base and was directly responsible for operations, including budget administration and facility improvements. Caton has earned graduate credits in Educational Administration and Writing.

**Stephanie Kornfeld**, Merchandise Program Manager, brings several years of retail management experience to the Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond. Kornfeld started her career in retail management at the Nature Company, where her duties as Senior Sales Associate included visual merchandising and staff development. While at Charette Corporation (retailer of supplies for the fine arts, architecture, commercial art, and drafting) in Woburn, Massachusetts, Kornfeld held a variety of positions with increasing responsibility. As the Manager of Charette's Harvard Design School Store, Kornfeld increased sales 50% by redesigning store layout and aggressively managing inventory. Kornfeld's experience as a Store Manager and Manager of Special Projects for Greenpeace USA fortified her desire to integrate her personal philosophies about education and the environment with retail management. While with Greenpeace, Kornfeld traveled throughout the United States exploring and opening new outlets for earth-conscious merchandise. Kornfeld, also an artist, invented a technique for making crocheted wall hangings based on the Native American Medicine Wheel.

Additional staff members include **Tom Harris** and **Mike Long**, interns from Salisbury State University in Maryland. Harris recently earned his Bachelor of Arts in History and plans to pursue an advanced degree in Environmental History. He is particularly interested in studying Thoreau's influence on contemporary environmentalists such as John Muir, Edward Abbey, and Dave Foreman. Long holds an undergraduate degree in Mathematics and has recently moved on to pursue an advanced degree at the University of Wyoming. His long-term goal is to pursue a career as a college professor. Both interns came to the Society with a great deal of enthusiasm and a strong passion for the works of Thoreau.

#### New Thoreau Society Logo

The Society's Board of Directors has adopted a logo that will soon begin appearing on all Society-related items. The Board wanted to select an image that the public would recognize as strongly connected to Thoreau and that would suggest his impact on contemporary issues. After careful consideration, the Board decided to adopt as the Society's official logo a rendering of the small house Thoreau built on the shores of Walden Pond (see inset for a preliminary version of the logo that the Board has adopted).



## Concord Prepares for Thoreau Sesquicentennial

**Richard Fahlander**

**[Editor's Note:** The following article is reprinted from the *Concord Journal* of 22 June 1995. Our report of the Thoreau Society's 1995 annual meeting will appear in the autumn issue of the bulletin.]

This Fourth of July marks the sesquicentennial of Thoreau's move to Walden Pond.

Concord's homegrown contribution to the celebration can be found just a mile or so from the pond in a courtyard at Concord-Carlisle High School. "Walled-In Pond" is the brainchild of science teacher Al Robichaud. Students have built a replica of Thoreau's cabin and created their own small pond.

"It is the only replica that is a functional structure actually located on a pond," said Robichaud.

He noted that the plastic-lined, raindrop-shaped, 5-foot-deep, 60-by-15 foot pond is oriented in the same direction as Thoreau's cove at Walden. Aquatic plants and animals were placed in the water and a model ecosystem is gradually being established. A waterfall has been under construction to aerate the water, which is circulated by a submerged pump.

Robichaud said more than 100 students in the Environmental Club and Earth Science classes contributed to the creation of this Thoreau Nature Center. The 7,500 square foot courtyard attracts a variety of birds. One mallard built her nest by the pond only three feet from a math classroom. All her eggs hatched and the ducklings were successfully raised in the enclosures. Turtles, fish, and frogs have reproduced and plant life, both wild and cultivated, is abundant and thriving.

To complete the Walden scene, a wood shed and bean field have been added. One unsuccessful addition was the introduction last year of a woodchuck. "Thoreau mentioned a woodchuck," said Robichaud, "so we thought it would be a good idea to accept a small one as a gift."

Little did the latter-day Thoreauvians know that the guest would produce six uninvited offspring.

"I spent my vacation trapping them and setting them loose in the woods," said Robichaud. "The high school maintenance staff may not be too happy with me now."

Included in the outdoor environmental study area are a newly installed observatory and stations for the study of wood flowers. Plans for a complete weather station are in progress.

Robichaud said when completed the center will satisfy the curiosity of students interested in fresh



water and soil ecology, nature photography, natural history, art, astronomy, and meteorology—all in the middle of a busy high school.

"It is also a quiet sanctuary for reading and journal writing," said Robichaud, who said students are planning a "moving-in party" on July 4. The high school parents association contributed funds toward construction of the center.

### 150th activities

One hundred fifty years ago Henry David Thoreau could scarcely have dreamt his move to a modest cabin in the woods at Walden Pond would have created such a stir.

Over the coming weeks Thoreauvians of all stripes will be treated to [a] plethora of activities.

At 6 a.m., July 4, a commemorative gathering is planned at Walden Pond. Breakfast at the parking lot, a walk to the hut site, and readings are included. Sign up by calling the Thoreau Society at 617-259-9411.

The Thoreau Society will hold its annual meeting in Concord from July 6 through July 9. Highlights include a Friday evening concert with jazz musician Paul Winter; a Saturday morning keynote address by sociobiologist E. O. Wilson; and a Saturday evening talk by scientist and nature writer Ann "Woodswoman" LaBastille. Except for the concert, sessions are open to members only. For more information call 617-259-9411.

The Concord Museum on Lexington Road houses the world's largest collection of Thoreau artifacts. On July 4 the museum will be open for visitors. Beginning July 7 the museum will offer a series of talks with a Thoreau theme. Reservations are required, and a fee is charged. For information call the museum at [508] 369-9763.

Surveying Concord—July 7 at 10:00 a.m.—Coffee and conversation focusing on the many ways Thoreau made known his town.

Thoreau, Concord, and the John Brown Connection—July 10 at 9:30 a.m.—A lecture, book-signing, and walking tour with Ed Renehan, author of *The Secret Six: The True Tale of the Men Who Conspired with John Brown*.

Long-Ago Lunchtime: Meet Mr. Thoreau—July 12 at noon—A special children's program (ages 5 to 8) in celebration of his birthday.

Digging Up the Past—July 13 at 9 a.m.—Young archeologists (ages 8 to 11) can get their hands dirty exploring the 19th century artifacts from the time of Henry David.

Henry David Thoreau, in the person of Brad Parker, will be speaking at 6 p.m., on July 8 at the Masonic Temple in Monument Square. Admission is \$8, with doors opening at 5:15 p.m. Parker was formerly with the Thoreau Lyceum.

Another portrayal of Thoreau, this one by David Barto, will take place at 7 p.m., on July 10 at the Concord Free Public Library. Through stories and flute music, children ages 7 and up (adults, too) will get a glimpse into the life of the man who went to the woods. Call [508] 369-6258 for details.

In the spirit of Thoreau, Walden Earthnet, a Concord-based environmental group, and the Human Scale Institute at Wheelock College will co-sponsor a workshop entitled, "Learning in Community: An Ecological Approach." The course will be held July 6-9 and will use Concord as a classroom without walls for participants to examine their interactions with their environment. For registration information call [508] 369-9259.

The Orchard House is sponsoring a lecture series this summer. At the first lecture on July 10 at 8 p.m. Thoreau scholar Thomas Blanding will speak on "Novel Ideas: Henry Thoreau and the Writings of Louisa May Alcott." For tickets call [508] 369-5617.

The new Shop at Walden Pond will wish Henry happy birthday on July 12. The shop is located across Route 126 from the pond and offers Thoreauviana and a surprisingly wide variety of books and products celebrating the natural world. For store hours call [508] 287-5477.

## Thoreau on the World Wide Web

We are pleased and excited to announce that users of the World Wide Web (WWW) who are interested in Thoreau now have a Thoreau site they can access. The address of the site, which is called "Thoreau World Wide" and is administered by Society members Sean Mahoney and Joe Smith, is <http://umsa.umd.edu/thoreau>.

Because of its capability of incorporating on-screen images and text in very attractive formats, the WWW is by far the fastest growing part of the Internet. Actually, the WWW is not an entity in itself but is instead a worldwide network of independently maintained "servers." In fact, anyone who has a computer with access to the Internet can set up his or her own WWW site. The server for Thoreau World Wide is located at the University of Maryland in College Park, although Mahoney and Smith maintain the site from Salisbury State University in Salisbury, Maryland.

When accessing Thoreau World Wide, the first thing users see on their computer screen is the site's home page. At the top of the home page is the word "CyberSaunter," and just under that word is a remarkably detailed electronically scanned image of the Maxham daguerreotype of Thoreau, the original of which is in the Thoreau Society archives at the Concord Free Public Library. Below the daguerreotype are the words "Henry David Thoreau," then a line extending across the screen followed by the greeting "Welcome to Thoreau World Wide!" and a few words to let users know that the site is "still under construction" and that users can make suggestions by sending e-mail messages to Mahoney and Smith at [spm0703@sae.ssu.umd.edu](mailto:spm0703@sae.ssu.umd.edu).

Like most WWW home pages, the one for Thoreau World Wide has a menu of items that users can select for delving into one or another of the site's

parts or "pages," each of which contains the equivalent of between two and ten computer screens of images and text. Although Mahoney and Smith plan to expand the number of pages offered on Thoreau World Wide, the site currently has the following six pages:

- **Introduction to Thoreau:** Overview of the life and works of Thoreau
- **Background behind Walden:** Facts surrounding his famous tenure at Walden Pond and subsequent book
- **Family:** A survey of the relatives of Henry and their involvement in his life
- **Friends and Love Interests:** Descriptions of the people who played a major role in Thoreau's life
- **Formal Education:** Henry's education in the classroom
- **Employment:** Besides spending two years, two months and two days at Walden Pond, Henry also had numerous "real jobs"

The site also features an already impressive library of over forty electronically scanned images, such as views of Walden Pond, the Thoreau family's Texas House and its Yellow House, the headstone at Thoreau's gravesite on Author's Ridge, Brister's Spring, the Old Manse, the Emerson House, Thoreau's survey of Walden Pond, several of Thoreau's friends, and all of Thoreau's relatives.

Mahoney and Smith say that they plan to add a great deal more information to the site in coming weeks and months, including an interactive tour of Concord and the area around Walden Pond.

## An Obituary of Helen Thoreau

### Henry Mayer

[**Editor's Note:** Mr. Mayer located the following obituary in *The Liberator* of 22 June 1849.]

#### ANOTHER FRIEND OF THE SLAVE GONE

Died, in Concord, on Thursday, June 14th, Miss HELEN THOREAU, aged 36 years.

Our friend, Miss Thoreau, was an abolitionist. Endowed by nature with tender sensibilities, quick to feel for the woes of others, the cause of the slave met with a ready response in her heart. She had a mind of fine native powers, enlarged and matured by cultivation. She had the patience to investigate truth, the candor to acknowledge it when sufficient evidence was presented to her mind, and the moral courage to act in conformity with her convictions, however unpopular these convictions might be to the community around her. The cause of the slave did not come before her in its earliest beginnings; but as soon as it was presented, she set herself to inquire how it was, that a system which imbrutes man so cruelly, which tears asunder all the tenderest ties so ruthlessly, which puts out the life of the soul, by denying it the means of growth and progress so

effectually, was supported. She saw the religious denominations with which she had been connected vehemently crying out against the Catholics for denying the Bible to the people, and yet one-sixth part of the people of the Protestant United States were legally deprived of the right to read God's word, nay, worse than the Catholics, the right of learning to read. She ascertained that the actual number of slaveholders in the land was not more than two hundred and fifty or three hundred thousand. How, she said, can these keep three millions of people in bondage? Why do not the slaves rise, as did our fathers in the revolution, and demand their rights at the point of the bayonet? She ascertained that the bayonets of the North were pledged to unite with those of the Southern tyrants, in case of any attempt at insurrection, and put down the poor crushed bondman, if, in his agony, he would strike down the oppressor. She saw that the nation had written in the Constitution the grievousness it had prescribed to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of the people, that widows might be its prey, and that it might rob the fatherless. This Constitution, every man, either by himself or his deputy, held up his hand to heaven, and swore, So help me God, I will sustain. She saw that in the same Constitution, they agreed, by the same solemn oath, if the poor victim of oppression should flee to any of the so-called free States, braving incredible danger, facing death in its most terrible forms, to obtain deliverance from his oppressors, and appeal to Northern men for protection, being pursued by his enslaver, they must perjure themselves, or allow his being delivered up to his pursuers, and sent back again to the most cruel bondage, without lifting a finger in his defence—thus stifling the noblest feelings of their natures.

In despair, she turned to the church. Surely, she said, the church of Christ is free from these abominations. But she found the church made up of men from all the political parties, alike pledged to the support of the accursed institution. In keeping with this, she saw the church, almost universally, giving to the slaveholder or his abettor, the right hand of Christian fellowship—calling him dear brother in Christ. She saw the pulpits of the North open to Southern divines, while the advocates of the slave knocked in vain for admission at the door of almost every church in the land. She said to herself, Is this the church of Christ, and has it come down so low? She repudiated such a church. Immediately did she turn her back upon its communion, and if she went to the house of prayer, as she occasionally did, she went to see if the spirit of Christ and humanity might not be rising among them. Again and again has she called upon the writer of this notice, when returning from church, and said, with strong emotion, it is all darkness and gloom. It was not eloquent declamation which led her from the church; but it was the array of strong, incontrovertible facts, which impelled her to the course she felt called upon to pursue and she knew



that the eloquence of anti-slavery owed its source to these same facts, and endowed with eloquence the most ungifted tongues. To her, as to many others, it was pleasant to go to the church on the Sabbath, and worship with her friends; and nothing but an entire conviction of its wrongfulness, in her case, would have prevented her constant attendance upon the institutions of religion. But the call to her was imperative—'Come out of her, that ye be not partaker of her plagues,' and she obeyed. This obedience brought peace in health, and peace in sickness. Not an hour of gloom did she experience during her protracted illness. Though constitutionally timid, the gloom of death was all taken away, and the king of terrors became to her an angel of hope and joy, opening before her bright visions of beauty, to use her own expression. One day, in conversation, she expressed her gratitude for what anti-slavery had done for her, in opening new and juster views of God, and truth, and duty, and exclaimed—'O how much has anti-slavery done for me, and how little have I done for it! I wanted health, that I might keep school, and in this way do something for the cause I so much love. But it is ordered otherwise.'

She experienced in its fullest extent the fulfilment of the promise—'Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord shall be with him upon his bed of languishing, and make all his bed in his sickness.' Her long continued illness made the suffering virtues, patience and resignation, to shine brightly, and smoothed away the sharp edges of her character, fitting her, we doubt not, for a polished stone in the great temple above.

The abolitionists of Concord will mourn deeply her loss; for, few and feeble as they are, they can ill afford to lose one so intelligent and so true. But they feel, that though no longer present with them in the flesh, she will still be a co-laborer with them in the great and good cause in which they have so long been associated.

## Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography

**Walter Harding**

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- Milder, Robert. *Reimagining Thoreau*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1995. 237pp. \$54.95. Approaching Thoreau through Kenneth Burke, Milder, who is director of graduate studies at Washington University in St. Louis, surveys all of Thoreau's writings, including their various drafts, in chronological order, from "The Natural History of Massachusetts" up to the end. He has also read widely in Thoreau criticism, having much to say not only about most of the significant books that have been written about Thoreau but also many of the articles. We are somewhat bothered, however, that so much of his commentary is negative—not about Thoreau but rather about the critics, as though his were the only possible interpretations. He has some good things to say—but so have lots of other people.
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- We are indebted to the following for information sent in for this bulletin: J. Armstrong, J. Austin, D. Barto, J. Dawson, B. Dean, J. Dennis, P. Dooley, M. Fischette, R. Galvin, D. Harding, L. Harding, P. Huber, E. Johnson, K. Kasegawa, B. Kritzburg, W. Montague, G. Ryan, M. Sagoff, R. Schneider, M. Sperber, M. Sealts, R. Thompson, K. Turkington, E. Walker, R. Winslow, B. Witherell, and S. Zulauf. Please keep Walter Harding (19 Oak Street, Geneseo, NY 14454) informed of items he has missed and new items as they appear.

## Donors to the Society:

The Society is grateful to the following members for their generosity in donating to our general fund:

- Nick Bulzacchelli, Pound Ridge, New York
- Mary Jane Row, Clifton Park, New York
- Harry LeFever, Springfield, Pennsylvania
- Alexander Armstrong, Ruxon, Maryland
- Theodore Haddin, Birmingham, Alabama
- Alex W. Moore, Jr., Traverse City, Michigan

## Thoreau Says No To Beeper Bondage

**Brent Staples**

[Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted from *The New York Times*.]

Weak on public transit, sprawling wildly over its landscape for 465 square miles, Los Angeles is and will always be the city of the car. Vast chunks of every Los Angeles day are spent driving, mainly by oneself, down endless freeways and boulevards.

This is not quite the solitude that Thoreau prescribed in *Walden*. To properly renew the soul,



Thoreau said, what you need is a cabin on a pond, at least a mile from the nearest neighbor.

These days, the only solitude most people get comes with commuting. In this, Angelenos are beyond compare. The time they spend alone, cruising in their cars, would seem ample space for introspection, if not for all of Tolstoy, via books on tape. Ample, but for their pocket telephones, pocket pagers, glove compartment fax machines, and all the rest.

On the Santa Monica Freeway, bronzed men in Porsches hurtle by at 90 m.p.h., yapping on the fly. On the Harbor Freeway not long ago, I watched as a woman rifled for a pager, checked it for the number, then bolted three lanes right for the exit, presumably to get to a phone. An emergency? Somehow I doubt it.

When science-fiction writers look to Los Angeles for clues about the future, mainly they focus on the pollution, the sprawl, or the "armed response" signs bristling on the city's lawns. But what Los Angeles also presents is a glimpse at the end of solitude—of the time in the not-so-distant future when portable phones, pagers, and data transmission devices of every sort keep us terminally in touch, permanently patched into the grid.

A decade ago wireless communication devices were relatively rare, largely limited to business use. The Personal Communications Industry Association now claims that 14,000 new wireless telephones and 11,000 new pocket pagers are being issued *every day*. Within a decade, 65 million Americans will own wireless phones; 52 million will be tethered to job, home, or family by pocket pagers.

Los Angeles is well up on the game. Sixty percent of its cellular phones are the pocket kind, twice the percentage of New York. In restaurants, pocket phones blossom from heads, like strange new appendages. "Sorry, I must have been out when you called." Remember that little white lie, after letting the phone ring because you felt like not talking?

The erosion of solitude picked up considerably with the answering machine (and its obsequious successor, voice mail)—and with the presumption that every call was worth preserving and answering. That's reasonable in business. But in private life, it has proved both false and time-consuming. True, we never miss a call from mom. Nor do we miss the wrong numbers, sales calls, heavy breathers, and people we simply wish not to hear from. Thanks to voice mail, then, we will never miss *any* call, ever again. Pocket phones and pagers rely for part of their appeal on the presumption that good citizenship means being forever in touch. That's a reasonable standard for doctors, plumbers, expectant fathers, or movie moguls for whom phone calls can mean millions of bucks. But few calls are so momentous.

Why the rush to put every man, woman, and child on an electronic leash? Technology is seductive; when a device exists, we feel compelled to own it. Solitude becomes "down time," to be filled in with gadgets. Time to read *Walden* again. It

reminds us that periods of solitude, fleeting though they be, are essential to nourishing what is valuable in us. We gain insight into how we live, a vantage point on our attitudes and habits. Without time to daydream, we grow tiresome and stale. As Thoreau put it: "We meet ... and give each other a new taste of the old, musty cheese that we are."

As would Thoreau, I say no to beeper bondage. Write me this summer at the cabin by the pond. It may take awhile, but I'll get back to you. Honest.

## Japanese TV Host Takes Modern View of Walden

**Richard Fahlander**

[Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted from the *Concord Journal*.]

A man in blue jeans and a red plaid shirt casts his fishing line into the calm water and sends concentric circles across Walden Pond. The afternoon autumn sun glistens through red and yellow leaves and refracts in the aqua-green glow of the water. To a passerby this idyllic scene along the shore of the cove made famous by Henry David Thoreau sums up the simple beauty of Walden, but beneath the surface it is a more complicated picture. The man with the ruddy face, strong hands, and quick smile is not an ordinary New Englander enjoying an afternoon outing. He is a Welsh naturalist and adventurer who has journeyed through the Arctic and Africa, and today is the narrator for a Japanese television film about the life of Thoreau.

Clyde William Nicol first encountered *Walden* at the age of fourteen. "A teacher said, 'Read this,' and I did," recalled Nicol, and the experience led him around the globe in search of natural adventure. Along the way, in 1962, he moved to Japan to study karate and fell in love with a woman and the Japanese landscape. For most of the past thirty-four years Nicol has made his home in Japan, although each summer he takes a solo kayak trek in the Canadian Arctic, where he survives on fish, tundra vegetables, kelp, and Arctic char. "I lose all this," he laughs, as he grabs a fold of flesh that hangs comfortably over his belt.

As a child in Britain, Nicol imagined Walden as being much smaller than it is, but as a result of his Arctic travels he estimated the size "just about right." His first impression when he arrived on Saturday was mixed. "I was horrified by the noise, the traffic, the planes; but I was impressed by the purity of the water and the lack of any garbage," he said.

Across the cove a three-member crew from NHK (Japan Broadcasting Company) records Nicol's angling for one scene of a 45-minute production about Thoreau. . . . Director Akihito Sakihara previously directed a twelve-part series on environmental ethics for NHK and one episode



focused on Thoreau as a pioneer in the field. He was so intrigued by the life of Thoreau that he decided to devote an entire program to the life of the Concord native.

Nicol was a natural choice for narrator. He speaks perfect Japanese and is well known as an environmentalist and novelist. But his greatest claim to fame may be as a television pitchman for products such as boots, whiskey, and ham. Nicol has used the earnings from his commercial ventures to purchase 45 acres of woodland adjacent to a national forest. "I'm doing a bit of an Emerson," he said, as he described the development pressure on the land that is adjacent to the site of the 1998 Winter Olympics. He feels very much a part of the conservation efforts of the Walden Woods Project.

In addition to Walden, the crew is visiting other local historic sites and interviewing Thoreau experts, such as Tom Blanding and Marcia Moss. Nicol has mixed feelings about the center of Concord as well. "There are far too many cars, and although it is well preserved and the shops are great, there are no green grocers or butcher shops. The lack of evidence of local people living here made me feel kind of lonely."

Filming in Concord is expected to be completed by the following Sunday, and the broadcast was expected to reach between 300,000 and 400,000 households in Japan. As Nicol casts his lure, he reminds his Japanese viewers that Thoreau never used a reel and rod to catch his fish. Off camera he jokes, "If there is a fish stupid enough to be caught by me, I'd like to see its face."

## Lowell Notices of Thoreau's Death and Funeral

**Richard Winslow III**

**[Editor's Note:** By discovering the following two items—not to mention other, similar items he has turned up—Mr. Winslow again shows how much material on Thoreau remains to be recovered from local libraries and historical societies.]

*Lowell Daily Citizen & News*. 8 May 1862.

DEATH OF HENRY D. THOREAU. The Boston Transcript of last evening announces the death of this charming writer, yesterday morning, at his home in Concord.... Mr. Thoreau was an original thinker and had become widely known and esteemed in literary circles. He has for many years shown unfaltering devotion to the anti-slavery cause. His departure, in the prime of manhood, will be greatly lamented. Mr. Thoreau was 44 years of age.

*Lowell Daily Citizen & News*. 12 May 1862.

The funeral of Henry D. Thoreau, which took place in Concord on Friday, was attended by a large company of citizens of that and neighboring towns, and services are described as unusually impressive.

Selections of Scripture were read, and a brief ode, prepared for the occasion by W. E. Channing, was sung, when Mr. Emerson read an address, marked, says the *Transcript*, by all his felicity of conception and diction—an exquisite appreciation of the salient and subtle traits of his friend's genius.

## I Discover Thoreau

**Nikita Pokrovsky**

I am frequently asked why I, a Russian citizen, have become so interested in Thoreau's ideas and have devoted so much time to them. I think this question is not so important, as I do not evaluate highly my personal contribution to "Thoreauviana." But from a strictly sociological point of view, perhaps, it may be interesting to discuss the topic here.

After having some success as an undergraduate student in the Philosophy Department of Moscow State University in the early 70's with my research on Thomas Jefferson, and wanting to continue studying the traditions of American social thought, I came across a dog-eared Russian translation, published in 1962, of Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. The copy belonged to the library at the university and was ragged because it had been read so much—*Walden* being one of the classics designated for compulsory reading for the history of Western literature course in the Philology Department.

In the margins of the copy were innumerable notes and "resolutions" made by students. The majority were messages of an irritated nature, in fierce criticism of Thoreau. That was not surprising, for the night before the exam students frequently tried to cram into their heads the entire wealth of 19th-century Western literature. And because Thoreau, with all his complications and paradoxes, was essentially forced into their hands on the way to the exams, he probably seemed almost a curse to them.

Now I feel sorry that I did not exchange that copy of "misunderstanding" for a clean one. What a marvelous exhibit it would be for a museum or even for my private book collection!

Be that as it may, *Walden* not only fascinated me—it took over my soul. I read it and re-read it, trying to separate the "necessary" from the "unnecessary" paragraphs in the book, but I finally realized they were all necessary. Since then Thoreau has become a permanent companion in my life.

Although my first paper on Thoreau was titled "The Social and Political Philosophy of Thoreau," today I am not sure if Thoreau had such a philosophy. Nonetheless, the paper expresses what I thought at that time. It seemed to me then that I should make Thoreau the subject of my graduation paper. But fate willed otherwise.

The leaders of the department decided that Thoreau was "not a promising figure"—not really a philosopher, an advocate of "doubtful" civil



disobedience, a non-collectivist who "ran away" from society, and so on. So they told me instead to apply my efforts to John Dewey, whose pragmatism fully met the requirements of my department for being a "real philosophy."

I started my work on Dewey with mixed feelings and soon found that Dewey was not a philosopher whose style of thinking I liked. In those years I was unable to understand all the subtleties of this thinker; he seemed simple and prosaic compared to Jefferson and the Transcendentalists.

The subject of my research became a problem again after I entered my graduate program at Moscow State University. Although the players were the same, the principal actor was different. For by that time I had attained my own vision of things in philosophy, and it became more difficult to impose upon me something that I did not approve of.

I had decided to resume my project on Thoreau, but again I clashed with the department. The academic council instead assigned me the topic "The Ethics of John Dewey." I liked Dewey a bit more than I had two years before, but I did not like him enough to "trade" him for Thoreau. Today I am thankful to the department for its opposition to my project on Thoreau, for that opposition forced me to read and re-read Dewey's writings. As for Thoreau, I read him constantly and in ever-widening circles, which included both his original works and commentaries on those works.

After two years of study in the graduate program, I understood that I could not write anything sensible about Dewey's ethics. Meanwhile, the department intermittently expressed its impatience, referring me to the official decision and to the resources that the state had already spent on my education. In those stagnant Brezhnev years, graduate students were constantly reminded how much the state spent to educate them. Although no one really knew what the state spent at that time, the reminders sounded threatening.

But I was older than most of my peers, and the departmental reminders had no effect on me. So I stubbornly returned to Thoreau. In the end the department gave in and agreed to let me study Thoreau, perhaps because it believed that expelling an obstinate graduate student would result in more problems than would its own patience and compromise. In any case, by the time the department's leadership reached this position, I had just six months to finish my work.

A series of personal troubles, which now seem absolutely trivial, soon occupied my thoughts and feelings, pushing Thoreau and Dewey and even the concerns about my department into the background. But a realization that I had very little time left to complete my studies forced me to begin reading *Walden* again. I found myself reading the book from a different angle of vision, one in which I discovered Thoreau to be a man of astonishing complexities and, what is more, an advisor, giving healthy and subtle recommendations on what to do when things are bad. I found in *Walden* the advice I needed at

that time, and from then on my work went on swimmingly.

Since then I have steadfastly maintained my interest in Thoreau, and my interest naturally led me to begin corresponding with some American Thoreauvians. In 1978, I was able to visit the United States for the first time; and I was particularly fortunate to be able to visit Concord, Walden Pond, and the Thoreau Lyceum, as well as to be able to meet Walter Harding and other leaders of the Thoreau Society. From then on I frequently visited America for research and teaching, and everything really significant in my life since that visit in 1978 has been connected to Thoreau or those who keep his memory alive.

## Sketches of Board Members Completed

**[Editor's Note:** In TSB 209 we printed brief biographical sketches of eight of our twelve Board members. Since then Eric Parkman Smith has resigned from the Board and from his position as Society Treasurer, so the following three sketches complete the roster.]

**Robert J. Galvin** has been a member of the Thoreau Society for more than fifteen years. He served as chair of the By-laws Review and Membership Development committees. Galvin has two sons—one an engineer and the other an environmental activist. He practices law in Boston.

Work Address: One Boston Place, Boston, MA 02108

**Daniel Shealy** is an Associate Professor of English and Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he regularly teaches courses on Thoreau and other writers of the American Renaissance. He has edited or co-edited seven books on Louisa May Alcott. Growing up on a farm in South Carolina, his first exposure to Thoreau was at the age of nine, when he read Sterling North's children's biography *Thoreau of Walden Pond* and became fascinated with Thoreau's ideas and life. "When I read *Walden* three years later, I was hooked—even though I didn't comprehend it all at the time. It was, even then, more than a book; it was a philosophy of life—one that I could return to again and again and discover new sources of inspiration. It was Thoreau who led me to Emerson and the other writers of New England."

Work Address: Graduate School, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC 28223.

**Elizabeth Hall Witherell** has been Editor-in-Chief of *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau* since 1981; she began working on the Edition in 1974, and moved the office to the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1983. She has a Ph.D. in American literature from the University of Wisconsin and has



taught at Barnard, Princeton, and UCSB. In addition to her work on the Thoreau Edition, Witherell is Curator of Manuscripts in the Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, UCSB, and has done fund-raising for the Library. She has a strong interest in Thoreau's records of his observations of the natural phenomena around Concord and a love of American poetry, which somehow survived her study of Thoreau's poetry for her dissertation.

Home Address: 914 California Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93103

## Additions To Nineteenth-Century Comment On Thoreau

### Kent P. Ljungquist

Several items below, designed to supplement materials from Boston and Worcester newspapers in Gary Scharnhorst's *Henry David Thoreau: An Annotated Bibliography of Comment Before 1900* (1992), are by Martha Le Baron Goddard (1829-1888). For transcriptions of some of the reviews and biographical information on Goddard, see Kent P. Ljungquist, "Martha Le Baron Goddard: Forgotten Worcester Writer and Thoreau Critic," *Concord Saunterer*, 2 (1994).

1. "New Publications," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 26 January 1871: 4. Mentions James Russell Lowell's essay on Thoreau in *My Study Windows*.

2. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron], "Letter from Boston," *Worcester Daily Spy*, late 1871. Describes a "lovely, lonely beach scene" in a painting by W. A. Gay at the Boston Art Club Exhibition, then compares the scene to Thoreau's poem that begins "My life is like a stroll upon the beach." This letter is reprinted in *Letters of Martha Le Baron Goddard* (Worcester: Davis & Banister, 1901), pp. 84-85.

3. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron], "Letter from Boston," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 16 September 1873: 2. Channing's *Thoreau, the Poet Naturalist* gives an austere portrait of his subject.

4. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron?], "Thoreau," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 6 September 1873: 2. This lengthy unsigned review of Channing's *Thoreau, the Poet Naturalist* (Scharnhorst #887) is probably by Goddard, principal Review Editor of the *Advertiser* and a fan of Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

5. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron], "Letter from Boston—The Concord Celebration," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 4 October 1873: 2. Thoreau is mentioned in a list of famous Concord authors.

6. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron], "Letter from Boston," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 22 May 1874: 2. Mr. Alcott "gave his talk about Concord authors, before a large gathering in private parlors.... A little bit of fun creeps into Mr. Alcott's manner ... as he talks about Thoreau" (Reprinted in *Letters of Martha Le Baron Goddard*, pp. 118-119).

7. "New Publications," *Boston Journal*, 6

December 1877: 2. Page's *Thoreau: His Life and Aims* reconciles Thoreau's apparent withdrawal from society with his humane impulses on behalf of John Brown and abolition. It is a book of "unique interest" and will stimulate renewed interest in Thoreau's life and work.

8. *Worcester Daily Spy*, 6 December 1877: 2. "All who esteem the somewhat narrow, rare but admirable genius of Thoreau will find pleasure" in Page's *Thoreau*.

9. *Worcester Daily Spy*, 1 January 1878: 2. "'April Days,' extracted from the Journals of Thoreau [and appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly*], will be read with interest."

10. *Worcester Daily Spy*, 20 May 1878: 2. "In 'Days in June,' further extracts are given from the journal of Thoreau."

11. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron], "Letter from Boston," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 29 July 1879: 2. Parts of this letter (Scharnhorst #1099), which quotes Thoreau's description of the Concord River, are reprinted in *Letters of Martha Le Baron Goddard*, pp. 145-47.

12. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron], "Letter from Boston," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 23 July 1880: 2. Refers to the battle of the ants from "Brute Neighbors" in *Walden*.

13. *Worcester Daily Spy*, 5 March 1881: 2. "Thoreau's admirers will read these selections [from *Early Spring in Massachusetts*] and need no suggestions."

14. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron?], "New Publications," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 22 April 1881: 2. Lofty praise for *Early Spring in Massachusetts* and Blake's loyal friendship.

15. *Worcester Daily Spy*, 29 June 1882: 2. Notice of an article and portrait of Thoreau in *Century Illustrated Magazine*.

16. *Worcester Daily Spy*, 28 July 1882: 2. "Thoreau's life was full of interest, and no one is better qualified than Mr. Sanborn to write such a work as this [biography in "American Men of Letters" series]."

17. "The Magazines," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 20 December 1884: 2. "'Winter Days,' extracts from the journal of Henry D. Thoreau, is an attractive paper."

18. "Literary Matters. New Books," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 5 December 1887: 3. These extracts from Thoreau's *Winter* are "warmly welcomed.... A fascinating book."

19. [Goddard, Martha Le Baron], "Our Boston Letter," *Worcester Daily Spy*, 13 December 1887: 2. *Winter* is the most interesting of the volumes Blake has assembled from Thoreau's journal.

20. "Books and Bookmen," (Worcester) *Light*, 24 January 1891: 10. Call for an illustrated edition of *Walden*.

21. "Books and Bookmen. Thoreau's Pencil," (Worcester) *Light*, 8 August 1891: 538. Thoreau's pencil is "a reminder of the man who gave a new gloss to the out-door life, who imparted charm to Walden Pond and to rural Concord that even Hawthorne and Emerson failed to create."



22. "Books and Bookmen," (Worcester) *Light*, 19 March 1892: 10. Concord Academy, where Henry and John Thoreau taught, has been the home of William Ellery Channing.

## Anne McGrath Honored at Walden Day Observance

Walden Forever Wild sponsored Walden Pond Day at the cairn adjacent to Thoreau's house site at Walden Pond on Saturday, 20 May 1995, and presented Anne McGrath its annual Roland Robbins Bronze Plaque Award. Landscape architect and Thoreau Society member Walter Brain delivered the keynote address at the ceremony, speaking on the need to protect the ecology of Estabrook Woods, Walden Woods, and other natural sites in Concord. Thoreau Society Board member Robert Galvin presented a sapling pine donated by the Walden Pond State Reservation to Walden Forever Wild founder Mary Sherwood and made the following remarks:

The Thoreau Society is very pleased that Anne is receiving the recognition due her. For years—decades—Anne has been educating people about Thoreau. Thousands of Concord second graders, high-school students from all over the United States, college students, and Elderhostel groups have learned, in many cases all they know about Thoreau, from Anne.

For years, I would listen—eavesdrop, really—as Anne talked to her students about Thoreau, his life, writings, philosophy, and place in American life and literature—and if I didn't know better, I'd believe that Anne actually knew Henry—and in a way, she does, more intimately than many professional scholars.

We're so pleased that Anne is continuing here in Concord the superb and very popular educational programs she has been conducting for so many years, and I know and trust that she will continue to do so for many, many years.

On behalf of the officers, Board of Directors, and members of the Thoreau Society—thank you, Anne.

A bring-your-own-lunch picnic followed at the Reservation, and we understand that a very pleasant time was had by all.

## Lincoln's Jacob Baker Farm J. Walter Brain

**[Editor's Note:** The following article appeared in the *Concord Journal* last summer and describes the property that the Society's current headquarters—the Thoreau Institute—is located on. Probably no one else knows Thoreau's haunts as well as Walter

Brain, who is a resident of Lincoln in addition to being a member of the Thoreau Society, a director of the Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance, and a landscape architect.]

Thoreau's Beech Spring, "which is a copious one," he entered in his journal for May of 1856, still flows today, even as summer crests, and feeds a littlebourne that winds between shallow banks to an impoundment down a short run. Thoreau cleaned this spring once, "a wet and muddy job," he confessed in the same 1856 journal entry, feeling that he had "done some service." As the poet-philosopher put it, "Cleared out a spring while you have been to the wars. Now that the warmer days make the traveler thirsty, this becomes an important work." The spring, he tells us, "was filled and covered with a great mass of beech leaves," just as it appears today.

The spring, and the beech grove it issues from, which Thoreau "discovered" in 1850, lie in the glacial channel at Jacob Baker's Farm in the Lincoln side of Walden Woods. A substantial part of what was known in Thoreau's time as the Jacob Baker Farm (not to be confused with the Baker Farm of Walden fame, also in Lincoln, owned by James Baker, brother to Jacob) is currently in the process of acquisition for conservation purposes.

### Seat of the new Thoreau Educational Center

The 18-acre property, with the grand Tudor-style mansion on it, is being purchased from the Adams family of Lincoln by the Walden Woods Project, culmination of a protection effort initiated in the summer of 1993 by the Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance and supported by the Thoreau Society and the Lincoln Conservation Commission. Don Henley, founder of the Walden Woods Project, once again comes to the rescue of historic Walden Woods. The Tudor-style mansion, built in 1905 by Alexander Henry Higginson for his own residence and seat of his Middlesex Hunt Club, will now become the seat of the newly-founded Thoreau Educational Center, to be managed and operated by The Thoreau Society under a special agreement with the Walden Woods Project.

### The Glacial Channel

The Glacial Channel at Jacob Baker's Farm, with Thoreau's beechen grove and Beech Spring in its secluded lap, is a glaciated wooded valley lying between Pine Hill and Bare Hill, in Lincoln, within the historic and physiographic boundaries of Walden Woods. The deep ice-age valley was the channel through which Glacial Lake Concord spilled into glacial Lake Sudbury. The valley is of historical, geological, and botanical interest, and lies contiguous to Lincoln conservation lands on Pine Hill, Bare Hill, and across Sandy Pond Road, with the woods surrounding Flint's Pond. The valley merits protection as an integral part of the ecology and history of Walden Woods. The Glacial Channel runs for about one-half mile on a roughly northeast to southwest gradient from Sandy Pond Road to the

Adams Impoundment above the meadows and fields of the old Jacob Baker Farm, of which the channel was also part in the middle of the 19th century. The channel valley, although first carved by ice as the glacier pushed its way south, plucking rock along an old fault line, was later reshaped and aggraded by water after the ice retreated north and the valley became a spillway between glacial lakes. The valley was further aggraded and molded by erosional processes into its present smoothly contoured cross-section, with gentle to slightly steep valley slopes, and a wet, narrow bottom which widens as the valley gradient dips, braided with rills, seepage pools, and a spring.

#### Oaks, maples, ferns

Red and scarlet oaks, white ashes, and sweet birches rise from the valley slopes, with tall arrowy white pines shooting up among them, over an understory of common witch hazels. Red maples rise from the valley bottom, mixed with sweet birches and white oaks, and, in wet places, with slender black ashes. A dense fernery creeps up the slopes from the wet, sphagnum-covered bottom, among thickets of silky cornel, clethra, clammy azalea, spicebush, arrow-wood, witch-hazel, and great panicle hydrangeas. Slender New York ferns grow densest along the narrow path at the foot of the western valley slope together with lace-like spinulose wood ferns; of ranks of march ferns like plumed soldiery below the path, with the larger cinnamon and interrupted ferns down in the valley floor. Extensive beds of hay-scented ferns creep up-slope from the path, affording the traveler a whiff of its fragrance. Wild sarsaparilla and Indian cucumber-root also line the path. Indian poke and skunk cabbage grow in the bottom, among the rills and pools. Hermit thrushes nest in these slopes, as they do all over Walden's wooded hills. Scarlet tanagers, wood pewees, wood thrushes, towhees, catbirds, red-eyed vireos, and pileated woodpeckers also make abode in this wooded dale.

#### Thoreau's beeches

An extensive beechen grove of old and young trees, with saplings and whips suckering from the mesh of old roots, clads the slopes to both sides of the valley bottom, about half-way down the length of the channel. This smaller but older stand further down valley which Thoreau knew as The Beeches, and celebrated in his journal.

Thoreau observed of the native beech that it had "almost disappeared from Concord woods," and listed it "among our rarer trees," together with the black or sweet birch and the hornbeam, all three far more common today, and vouched upon his discovery of this "small grove of beeches ... standing by a little run which at length makes its way through Jacob Baker's meadow," that it was "worth the while to go some mile only to see a single beech tree." The little run mentioned by Thoreau flows from the spring that issues from under the bole and roots of a massive old beech tree, lowermost in the

small grove, which consists today of seven mature old trees. The beechen grove, regenerated from its own mesh of roots, may be well be the oldest station of American beech in the Concord region.

#### A spring for a parched soul

On a hot forenoon last summer I set out for the Beech Spring. What a destination for a man with a parched soul! The very thought of a source from the cool caverns of the earth, the anticipation of coming by a sparkle of water flowing out of the ground quenched at once all my thirsts. The spring issued from a cavity under the bole of an ancient, gnarled beech tree and trickled over a bed of sand and pebbles. I wetted my palms and face and neck in humble ablution as a wood pewee sang from near the source a lyric strain as pure and transparent as the rill that flowed by my knees. Catbirds poked about, mewing from the hydrangea coverts which arched down the brook. Chewinks sang too, that tinkle of a song which sparkles in the ear. Chickadees, their ranks replenished with young and novel cheer, descended to the spring and sought there the same refreshment I had.

## Concord's Great Fields

J. Walter Brain

[**Editor's Note:** The following article is reprinted from the *Concord Journal* of 6 July 1995.]

I am eager to report the glory of the universe," Thoreau enters in his Journal, reporting on his walk to Concord's Great Fields on an early spring day. "This air is full of blue-birds," he reports, "I lean over a rail to hear what is in the air liquid..." and rises to a rapturous "My life partakes of infinity."

Concord's Great Fields still delight the walker with the spring warble of bluebirds and furnish mast for his poetic instinct.

Thoreau had attached a symbolic and mystical significance to these fields, where he first saw the light, in the cosmic vision he had projected of his own place and time. "The way to heaven," he wrote once, "is from east to west around the earth. The sun leads and shows it. The stars too light it."

Thoreau not only had been born on the Minot Farm, near the foot of Pine Hill at the edge of the fields, but had often sought, as a lad, the retreat and berried bounty of its haunts, "Spending midsummer hours / With such secure delight they hardly seemed to flow."

Concord lay at the center of gravity of Thoreau's own universe, at the matrix of his personal cosmology. All the gyrations of the celestial sphere—the seasons, the days, the points of the compass—he saw as revolving about his native place and his personal life. Even his daily walks he saw as function of some heavenly influence. He believed he had been born in the most estimable place in the world, "and in the nick of time too," by which he meant to bring together the coordinates of time and



space, of existence itself, to the very center of his own life, projecting a vision in which his life, as paradigm of the life of man, was in harmony with the cosmos.

The Great Fields had easily lent themselves as vehicle and metaphor to what Thoreau believed to be the nature of his native genius: a certain clarity of thought, obedience to "the suggestions of a higher light within you."

Of the four "great wild tracts" that Thoreau identified as the major units of landscape in his poetic vision of the town of his birth, the Great Fields were the tract of open country, of farm fields, pastures, meadows, orchards, crisscrossed with brooks, ditches, hedgerows, cart paths, and stone walls. These fields, which Thoreau resorted to for solace, and which had witnessed the historic events of 1775, make up still the largest stretch of open countryside left in Concord, retaining much of their original rustic character and bucolic mobility.

According to Lemuel Shattuck, author of *A History of the Town of Concord*, published in 1835, the Great Fields extended "from the Great Meadows on the north to the Boston Road south, and down the river considerably into the present limits of Bedford, and up the river beyond Deacon Hubbard's, and the extensive tract between the two rivers...."

Thoreau's tract was considerably smaller and appears to have been limited to the open country that ran northeasterly and easterly of the town center, from the Great Meadows on the north, to the Boston or Battle Road on the south, and extending easterly into the Virginia Meadows or Bedford Levels.

This "fourth" of the great wild tracts encompassed, between the Great Meadows and the Bedford Levels, Sleepy Hollow and Moore's Swamp round below Authors' Ridge; the fields to the north of the Revolutionary Ridge and south of Bedford Road, which Thoreau himself surveyed in 1853 for its layout as a new road; the ancient Cranefields, to the north of the same road, in cultivation since before the English settlement of Concord; Peter's Farm, overlooking the Great Meadows; and the bogs at Gowing's Swamp and Beck Stow's Swamp, where he often went "a-cranberrying."

The inspiring charm of this tract lies in its open character, its ample prospects of field and meadow, and, in particular, at the Bedford Levels, the views of the wooded hills that bound them to the north, the west, and due south, in a scenic composite of great rural beauty. Smith Hill bounds the Levels to the south, prominently visible from the northern tier of fields; the Revolutionary Ridge rises abruptly to the west, with decisive scenic impact upon much of the farm country and on the approach to Concord along the Battle Road. The compass of this open countryside, however, revolves on its scenic pivot at Pine Hill, upon which all prospects and views converge, from every field, meadow and country path, and, most notably, from all along the Battle Road as its skirts the Bedford Levels.

Pine Hill's gentle outline communicates beauty

of repose and serenity to the bucolic landscape it looms over and proves crucial to its aesthetic integrity.

## Notes & Queries

According to the *Concord Journal*, at an outdoor festival from 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, 20 May 1995, the Alcott family and their guests, including Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, hosted a wedding of Anna Alcott and John Pratt at Orchard House, 339 Lexington Road in Concord.

The local newspaper in Concord, Massachusetts, the *Concord Journal*, now has an Internet address: [cjeditor@cjjournal.com](mailto:cjeditor@cjjournal.com).

Dick O'Connor passes along this anagram on "hound, bay horse, turtledove": "Henry D. Thoreau doubts love." As has been pointed out, the sentence could be recast "Henry D. Thoreau loves doubt."

The Society is compiling a book for general audiences titled *101 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Thoreau* and encourages members to send in the questions about Thoreau that they are most often asked (see Lincoln address in box below). The questions asked and answers given at our annual Thoreau Quiz will form the basis for the book, but with the exception of the last two years, we do not believe anyone has recorded those questions. In any case, we are confident that many of our members field questions from friends and family about Thoreau, so we ask members to pass along those questions they hear most often. Your contributions will be acknowledged in the book.

The Voyager Company has issued a library of interactive essays, games, art, and literature called *If Monks Had Macs...* (\$34.95). The library currently has twenty-four volumes in four collections, one of which is "The American Renaissance," which in turn features *The World of an Idea in the Life of Henry David Thoreau*. This volume examines from five distinct points of view Thoreau's life and ideas in the context of the American Renaissance of the 1850s. For more information, call the company toll free at (800) 446-2001.

In his new book *A Moment on the Earth: The Coming Age of Environmental Optimism*, Gregg Easterbrook points out that in the mid-19th century, Massachusetts was about thirty-five percent wooded, whereas today the state is fifty-nine percent wooded.

According to his posthumous book, *Confessions of a Barbarian*, Edward Abbey (Little, Brown, 1994, p. 277) wished to have selections from Thoreau read at his funeral. Does anyone know if that wish was carried out?

According to *Bookman's Price Index*, vol. 49, the following prices have recently been asked for Thoreau volumes at various bookstores: *Cape Cod*, Riverside Large Print, \$225; *Cape Cod*, Limited Editions Club, \$125, \$100; *Letters from Various Persons*, first edition, \$450; *Walden*, 1st, \$325; 4th,



\$325; *Lakeside*, \$100; *Walking, Ninja*, \$180, \$220; *Week*, 1st, \$850.

*Bookman's Price Index*, vol. 50, lists *Civil Disobedience*, Godline edition, \$195; *Maine Woods*, 1st edition, \$250; *Poems of Nature*, \$350; *Walden*, 1st English edition, \$300; *Walden*, Bibliophile edition, \$750; *Walden*, Limited Editions Club, \$750; *Yankee in Canada*, 1st \$600.

The *American Book Prices Current* lists the following prices for the sale of Thoreau books: *Walden*, 1st edition, \$2,250, \$7,000, \$6,500, \$2,500, \$3,750; *Week*, 1st, \$10,000, \$18,000 (inscribed to Prudence Ward); Manuscript Edition, \$7,000, \$1,600, \$5,000; Limited Editions Club *Walden*, \$325, \$350; Limited Editions Club *Week*, \$55. Prices for Thoreau books have risen remarkably in the last several years.

The Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, at their annual convention this year at Bentley College, featured a sweatshirt depicting Thoreau and other American philosophers having a picnic at Walden.

A new line of kayaks are sold as Walden Paddlers, according to the May *Esquire*.

Kenneth Turkington, 35 Russell Hill Rd., Brookline, NH, 03033 is selling rosewood reproductions of Thoreau's aeolian harp for \$250, walnut reproductions for \$120, and kits for \$40.

We grieve to announce the death of Thoreau scholar Sherman Paul at the age of 74 in Bemidji, Minnesota, on 28 May 1995. Paul's *The Shores of America* (1958) has long been among the foremost

volume of criticism of Thoreau's works.

Dave Barto gave his impersonation of Thoreau at Walden Pond for the last time this summer—his twelfth year.

Kenneth Brower's *The Starship and the Canoe*, listed in the winter bulletin as a novel, is instead a factual account.

Kevin Radlaker presented his interpretation of Thoreau at the Indiana Leadership Association annual conference at Greencastle, Indiana, on 10 June 1995.

MacDonnell Rare Books (9307 Glenlake Drive, Austin, TX 78730) has recently issued a catalog of books by Concord authors. Listed are many rare and unusual Thoreau items. Bauman Rare Books (1215 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107) has also issued a catalog with many Thoreau items.

The Thoreau Society of Japan held its annual

spring convention at Keio Gijyuku University on 19 May 1995, with Yoshimi Anzai of Ashikaga Technical College presiding. Hikaru Saito of Meisei University delivered the opening address, and Sho Yamamoto of Keio Gijyuku University offered the Society greetings. Toshihiko Ogata of Buddhist University spoke on "Thoreau and the

Indians," followed by

Shoji Goto of St. Paul and Rikkyo Universities on "Thoreau after Thoreau: Jewett and Veblen." Before the business meeting, chaired by Kazuto Ono, Kodo Yakagi of Taiisho University spoke on "Fond Memories of the Thoreau Society of Japan." George Saito of Dartmouth College delivered the closing address.

**Make plans now to  
attend the next annual  
meeting of the Thoreau  
Society, 11-14 July  
1996, Concord,  
Massachusetts**

**THE THOREAU SOCIETY, INC.**, is an international nonprofit organization of students and admirers of Henry David Thoreau organized in 1941 under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and headquartered at the Thoreau Institute in the historic Walden Woods. The purpose of the Society is four-fold: (1) to honor Henry David Thoreau, (2) to foster education about and stimulate interest in his life, works, and philosophy, (3) to coordinate research in his life and writings, and (4) to act as a repository for Thoreauviana and articles of memorabilia relevant to Henry David Thoreau and his times.

To fulfill its purpose, the Society operates—in addition to its headquarters—The Shop at Walden Pond, a visitor's center with a bookstore and gift shop at the Walden Pond State Reservation in Concord, Massachusetts; an educational and public-outreach program in collaboration with The Concord Museum at 200 Lexington Road in Concord; and editorial offices in the Department of English at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. In a joint venture with the Isis Fund, the parent organization of the Walden Woods Project, the Society will build an archives/reading-room/media-center complex at the Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, with construction scheduled to begin in September 1995 and to be completed in the late spring of 1996.

Membership in the Society is open to the public and includes subscriptions to its two publications, *The Concord Saunterer* (published each autumn) and *The Thoreau Society Bulletin* (published quarterly). The Society meets in Concord each July and sponsors various educational programs and Thoreau-related excursions throughout the year. Individual and institutional dues are \$20; students \$10; family \$35; contributor \$100; life \$500. Contributors become life members after ten years. Non-life members outside the U.S. should add a \$5.00 handling fee.

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